

Subcommittee Chairman BOBBY SCOTT did, and the effects, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman, of Congressman LOUIE GOHMERT, the distinguished gentleman from Texas who himself is a former judge. These three gentlemen were tireless advocates for better judicial security, and I urge my colleagues to support this critical bipartisan measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for these closing remarks.

I agree with HOWARD COBLE, the gentleman from North Carolina, that our Nation's court system and those who work there must function in a safe and professional environment, and that is what we are improving in this measure. We have worked together in great harmony and cooperation, and the measure helps in a substantial way to promote better security for our judiciary and other court personnel, and I urge our colleagues to support the passage of this critical measure.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 660, the "Court Security Improvement Act of 2007." This legislation will go a long way toward enhancing the security and integrity of our judicial system and the able men and women who comprise the Federal judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, let me quote the Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court: "Our democracy and the rule of law depend upon safe and secure courthouses." That is because an independent judiciary is essential for a regime based on the rule of law. Nothing can do more to undermine the independence of the judiciary than the very real threat of physical harm to members of the judiciary or their families to intimidate or retaliate. In 1979, U.S. District Court Judge John Wood, Jr., was fatally shot outside of his home by assassin Charles Harrelson. The murder contract had been placed by Texas drug lord Jamiel Chagra, who was awaiting trial before the judge.

In 1988, U.S. District Court Judge Richard Daronco was murdered at his house by Charles Koster, the father of the unsuccessful plaintiff in a discrimination case. The following year, U.S. Circuit Court Judge Richard Vance was killed by a letter bomb sent to his home. The letter bomb was attributed to racist animus against Judge Vance for writing an opinion reversing a lower-court ruling to lift an 18-year desegregation order from the Duval County, Florida schools.

In this age of the global war on terror, the danger faced by Federal judges, judicial officers, and court personnel is real, as illustrated by the three murders noted above. The recent and tragic murder of U.S. District Court Judge Joan Humphrey Letkow's husband and mother reminds us that the danger has not abated.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 660 provides a three-pronged legislative response to the security challenges facing our judicial institutions and personnel. First, it directs the U.S. Marshals Service to consult with the Judicial Conference regarding the security requirements for the judicial branch, in order to improve the implementation of security measures needed to protect judges, court employees, law enforcement officers, jurors and other members of the public who are regularly in Federal courthouses.

The bill also extends authority to redact information relating to family members from a Federal judge's disclosure statements required by the Ethics in Government Act and removes the sunset provision from the redaction authority, thus making the redaction authority permanent.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 660 also enhances the security and protection of judicial personnel and their families by making it a criminal offense to maliciously record a fictitious lien against a Federal judge or Federal law enforcement officer. This new crime and punishment is intended to deter individuals from attempting to intimidate and harass Federal judges and employees by filing false liens against their real and personal property.

The bill also makes it a crime to publish on the Internet restricted personal information concerning judges, law enforcement, public safety officers, jurors, witnesses, or other officers in any U.S. Court. The penalty for a violation is a maximum term of imprisonment of 5 years. Additionally, the bill increases the maximum penalty for killing or attempting to kill a witness, victim, or informant to obstruct justice or in retaliation for their testifying or providing information to law enforcement by increasing maximum penalties.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, this bill makes a substantial contribution to the enhancement of security of judicial institutions and personnel. I urge all members to join me in supporting this beneficial legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I have no requests for time, and I too yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 660, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### INTERSTATE RECOGNITION OF NOTARIZATIONS ACT OF 2007

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1979) to require any Federal or State court to recognize any notarization made by a notary public licensed by a State other than the State where the court is located when such notarization, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1979

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Interstate Recognition of Notarizations Act of 2007".

#### SEC. 2. RECOGNITION OF NOTARIZATIONS IN FEDERAL COURTS.

Each Federal court shall recognize any lawful notarization made by a notary public licensed or commissioned under the laws of a State other than the State where the Federal court is located if—

(1) such notarization occurs in or affects interstate commerce; and

(2)(A) a seal of office, as symbol of the notary public's authority, is used in the notarization; or

(B) in the case of an electronic record, the seal information is securely attached to, or logically associated with, the electronic record so as to render the record tamper-resistant.

#### SEC. 3. RECOGNITION OF NOTARIZATIONS IN STATE COURTS.

Each court that operates under the jurisdiction of a State shall recognize any lawful notarization made by a notary public licensed or commissioned under the laws of a State other than the State where the court is located if—

(1) such notarization occurs in or affects interstate commerce; and

(2)(A) a seal of office, as symbol of the notary public's authority, is used in the notarization; or

(B) in the case of an electronic record, the seal information is securely attached to, or logically associated with, the electronic record so as to render the record tamper-resistant.

#### SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) ELECTRONIC RECORD.—The term "electronic record" has the meaning given that term in section 106 of the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (15 U.S.C. 7006).

(2) LOGICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH.—Seal information is "logically associated with" an electronic record if the seal information is securely bound to the electronic record in such a manner as to make it impracticable to falsify or alter, without detection, either the record or the seal information.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

□ 1615

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, this measure is a commonsense requirement with respect to the process of notarizing documents that occur in every State, every city, every county. And what we do in H.R. 1979 is simply to require Federal and State courts to recognize documents lawfully notarized in any State of the Union when interstate commerce is, in fact, involved.

As we all know, notary publics play a critical role in ensuring that the signer of a document is, indeed, who he or she claims to be and that the person has willingly and without coercion signed the document. By performing these two tasks, the notary public serves as an indispensable first line of defense against fraudulent acts and other manipulations of contracts and other documents.